

OLIVER DOE

Salty Sweet

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First Edition

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Contact oliversdoe@gmail.com for more information

Hair

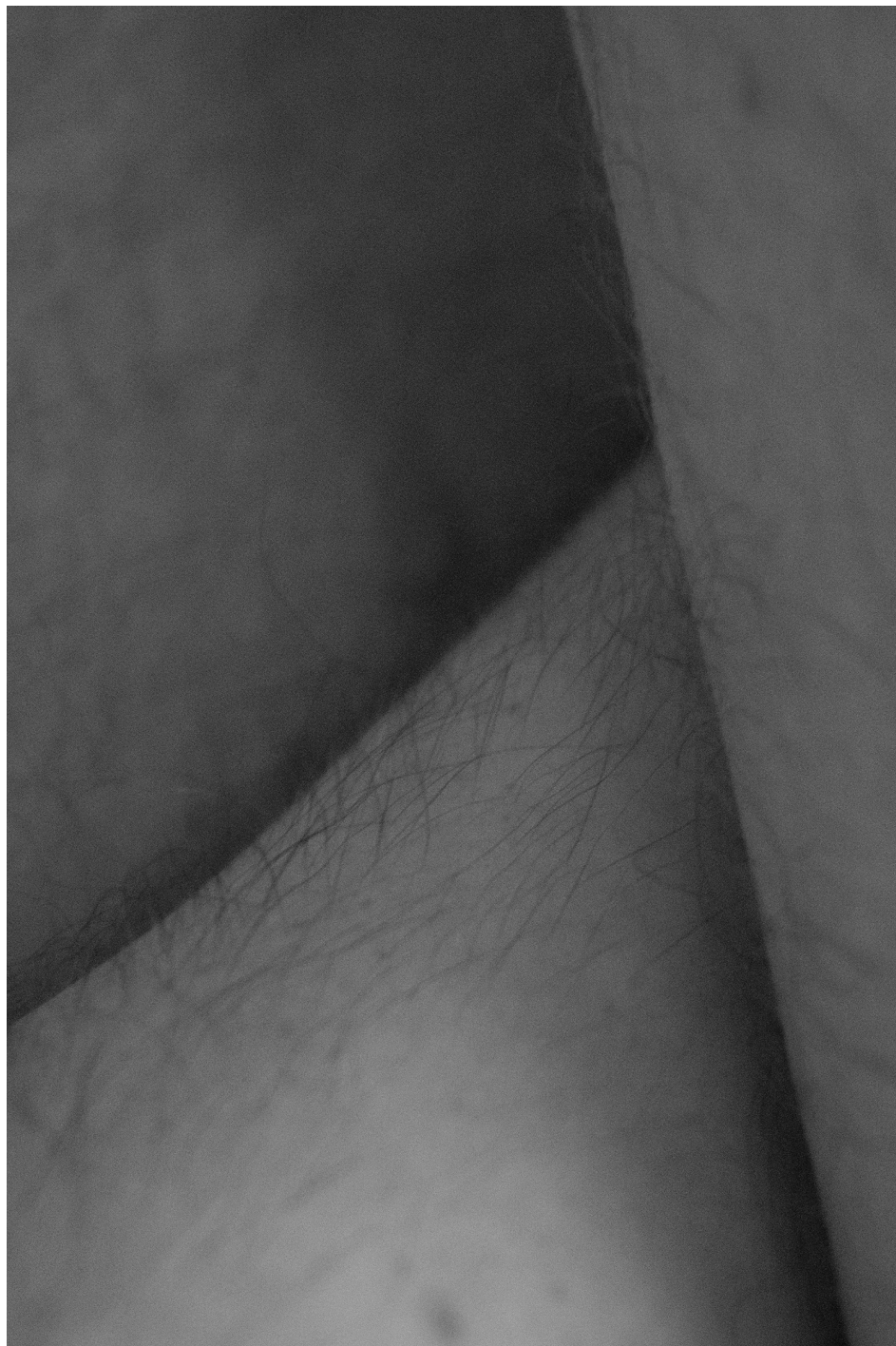
This flesh lying naked pubic lustful,
A prism of hair and teeth,
Heat and wonder and quicksilver eyes,
In cotton and polyester and sweat.
This blonde, sexless body with its outrageous
crucifix,
Wrapped in pale lace,
Bedded between bedding and soft legs;
Swallowed and swollen,
Obsessed and obscene.
Selling cells of the self with visions of
Sailor-gods with sanguine cheeks,
Who burn their cigarettes at both ends
And suck on the thin white papers
To draw their nectar out.
All this whilst kissing lips and legs and latex,
Under the light of London's gloaming moon,
As guilt roams free across grey matter
And stomach acid sits sweet
in the wet machinery of the back of the throat.

Self-Portrait, 11:43 a.m.

Afraid of my own body,
Frayed, naked, wet, pale;
A plastic bag of skin and bone and blurring sex,
Six foot of confusion and loss
because
My sex is not your sex but our sex is better.
And maybe I drink my coffee
Black, one sugar
To pretend that something here is bitter-sweet
Like those songs we listen to because
We all got left behind,
But I know I don't feel myself slipping away;
I was never there in the first place.
So say they:
Invisibly visceral and twice as uncomfortable.

Slate-grey afternoon spent
with mouth full of flowers,
with eyes full of fear and
with lungs full of you –
of youth, and yearning.

I cannot feel you,
like pollen from the lime trees,
in the air today



A Corner Shop Ballad

Mad love in bed-sheet

Mad love in car park

Mad love in nightclub

Mad love in TV.

Made love in Paris

London, Devon and here.

 Faked love in shadows,

 Who to touch when the lights go off?

It's been more than two years since then...

Hated love when drunk and lonely,

Faced love when looking for a new shirt.

Loved love in February,

Needed love in November,

Wanted love when stuck in bed.

Taken love with a stiff drink,

Wanton love too hard to think

 Stuck in film or record groove,

Lived life of love, static,

Swallowed love with tea and wine,

That mad love of mine.

O, Heathen, Here

I

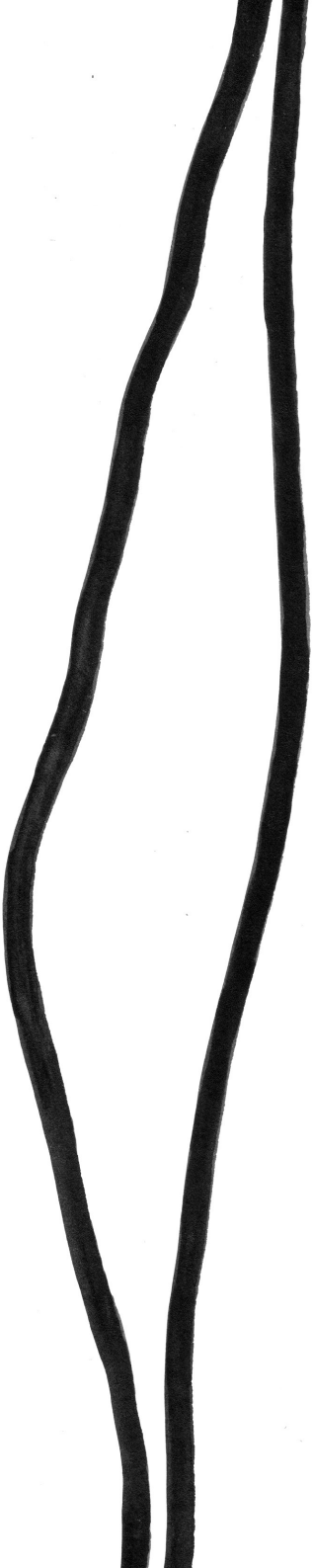
Holy spectres wail through walls
Reciting pornographic poetry for barman or Blake,
Telling tales of canine visions
Of tooth and nail on Sinai
Of rooftop aftermath or
Of becoming in ecstasy.
Screaming through cities on train howling thoughts of now
And what their people might have lost.
Losing their minds through country, Embraces burning;
Love is no longer love -
Paranoid love as body turns to dust.
Lamenting Rites across ocean
Of Spring, of Passage, of War
Of roads through endless corridor
Lined with its rooms of violence of sex of spirit...
Bleeding out nationality on borders to dance in parts unknown,
But purely as self-defence,
Surely as self-defence?
Talking songs belie tuneless ideals of
Ebullition and fate,
So whispering poems to themselves
In the in-between times feast
On emeralds or autobiographies or
The bruised cores of windfall fruit of knowledge
Not giving in b'espredel society staying
White-handed, God, of greater machinery
To watch down on He, tearing at temples
To reach the naked and hairless body of desire
That forever lies behind Him –
The public friend of one-eyed tragedy.

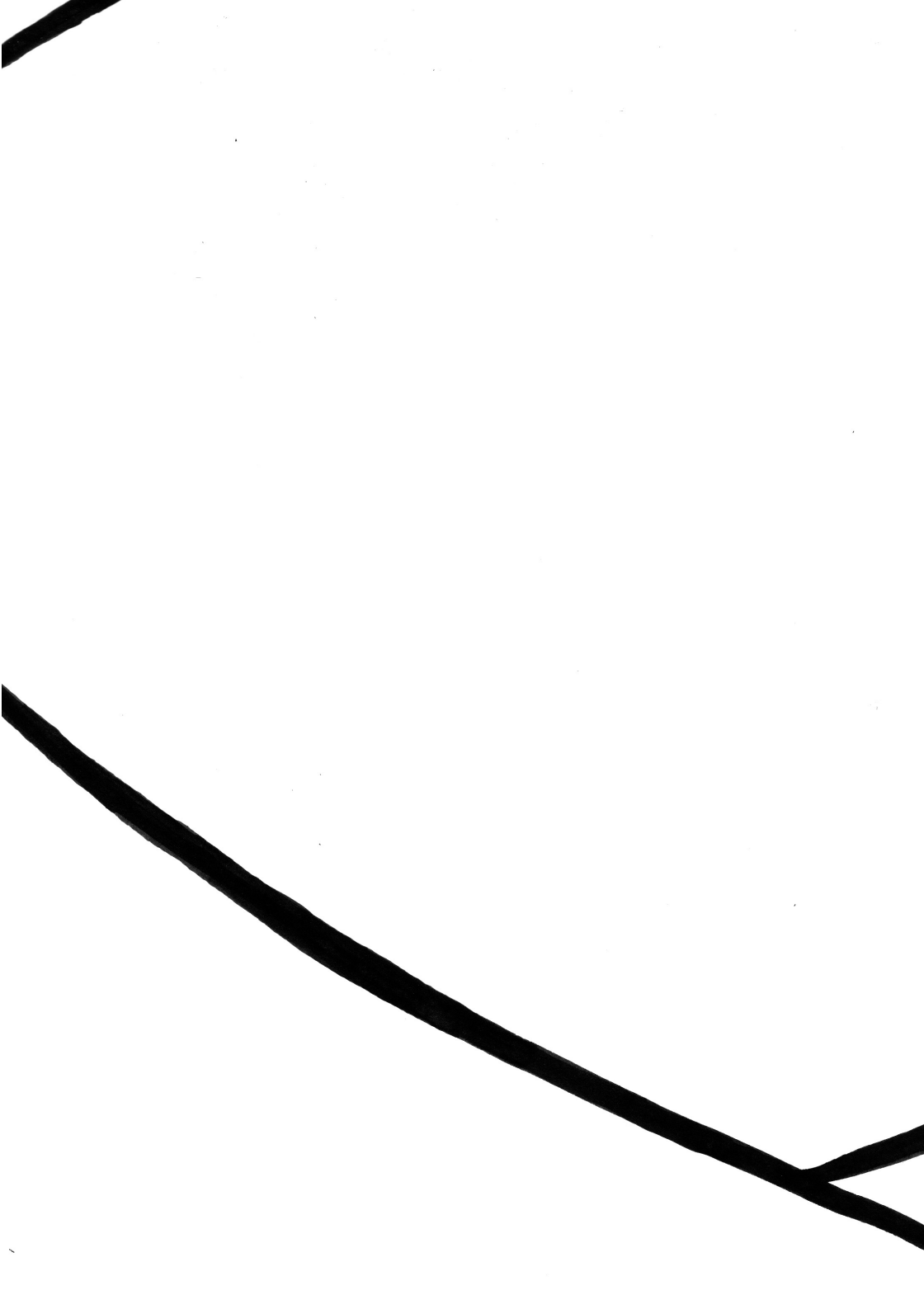
So now tried and tired seated high on white noise
 Luscious in their angular edgeless form and
 Baulking at the absurdity of their plane,
 Spirits pour themselves out on thresholds of houses,
 My doorstep littered with the ashes of Phoenix
 Taken down by burning bottle.
 Across county court debates their existence
 Unsure of tongueless practice Mensch
 Crying incomprehensible psalms
 As evidence of their alcoholic sanctity.
 All this while the atheists kneel to the East,
 Placeless and displeased without structure –
 Lighting fires in their mouths to protest their mortality.
 Salesmen set up empty pitch for Jehovah,
 Tired of their suits and silence.
 Teenagers trying to get some in parks or parents'
 Playing easy and inept over dead grass at dawn,
 Laughing nervously in the backs of black cars,
 Or hauling down back steps when Howe calls.
 And younger, gaining education from billboard-saint or flyer
 Whose immoral message sits high and magnified
 Above those in tattered brick and blue,
 Wrapped in cellophane celebration for coming of Cash –
 Swallowed – Or eaten whole by whole-heart wheat grass.
 In public zoo, homeless and wretched dreaming Harvester Moon,
 With fox seated at right hand of gold-brown bench-throne,
 Lie painless full of vision wordless world-less, too,
 Under Autumn trees at sunburned dusk.
 Grounded by flightless white plane in ash
 With great azure obligation hanging from tired shoulder.

III

Even sacred collapse down Dead Sea sink-hole,
 Dragged by Damien or dissident;
 More likely home to Holy Men than Heathen,
 Bound to walk in circles amongst We the many:
We the many who suck the fat from the torso of life,
Prying blood from the veins of Gaia (for pleasure or wit, carelessly).
Even the drunken Adonis of London and New York
 Cannot smoke out their lovers, all neutered here,
 So non-descript as to lose all sense of self
Left to touch bare indiscriminate bodies and souls.
 Roots spread from naked feet to fiery ground,
Locking lamenting corpse to womb of soil or sewn
 Into the fabric of intent patched together by Danté
 And then torn apart by Milton.
 Left to pour over a non-existent land
Which is still surrounding our book-bound shackles,
 Pulling up the tender roots of civilisation
 To ensure that none can truly grow,
Tortured into erasing our only hopes that it might just be
 Purgatory, or dusk-land before dawn,
 Still driven by mad ambition to escape
 Concrete confines of tower and teeth.
Sunday Mass Sacrament to burn as the books in Leningrad,
 Mass appeal, mass market, mass murder.
 Meat - kept warm by heartfelt paranoia
 Lust naked flesh flies plead ignorance
 To the very best of their waning ability,
 Dragging bodies at feet sighing and weeping
At the very thought that something might come
 Of their hollow businesses.







There is no longer
a sun beating at my neck –
it faded last year.

Scape

A wave descends upon me,
Vast as the Irish sea which descends upon London
Twice a year
At Christmas, maybe Death-time
To sit by tables and beds until flood;
Into spirits and short glasses,
Pours itself upon me
Like some limestone-leak golem
Stuck amongst the rocks for centuries,
A part of the landscape so easily forgotten
In stone and rock and crevice
More than One Hundred and Twenty Seven Hours
Pinned beneath its own vices;
No road-trip to fantasise,
No tortuousness to realise,
No account to emphasise –
But screaming through,
When the horn of passing calls its final call
Or Old-Time obligation rings its steeple bell,
Fuelled by cigarettes and news
Without regard for place or time.
And yet that wave seems to shrink
With every lap of its bitter-salted tide
Against our shores;
Have I grown?
Have I outgrown the comparisons
To faces I've never encountered?
Or is death finally eating away at the waters
Which always seemed to take from us
At every tide?



I try to think of you
as I lie to sleep –
that I might imagine us on Sardinian beaches,
or discover those paintings
we saw in Paris,
patched up and pallid.

Don't take the warmth of my hands
for granted;
that nervous sickness still takes me over
nearly three years later.

I am not dry
like the pages of your books
that have so much more soul
than I, bleached and dreaming.

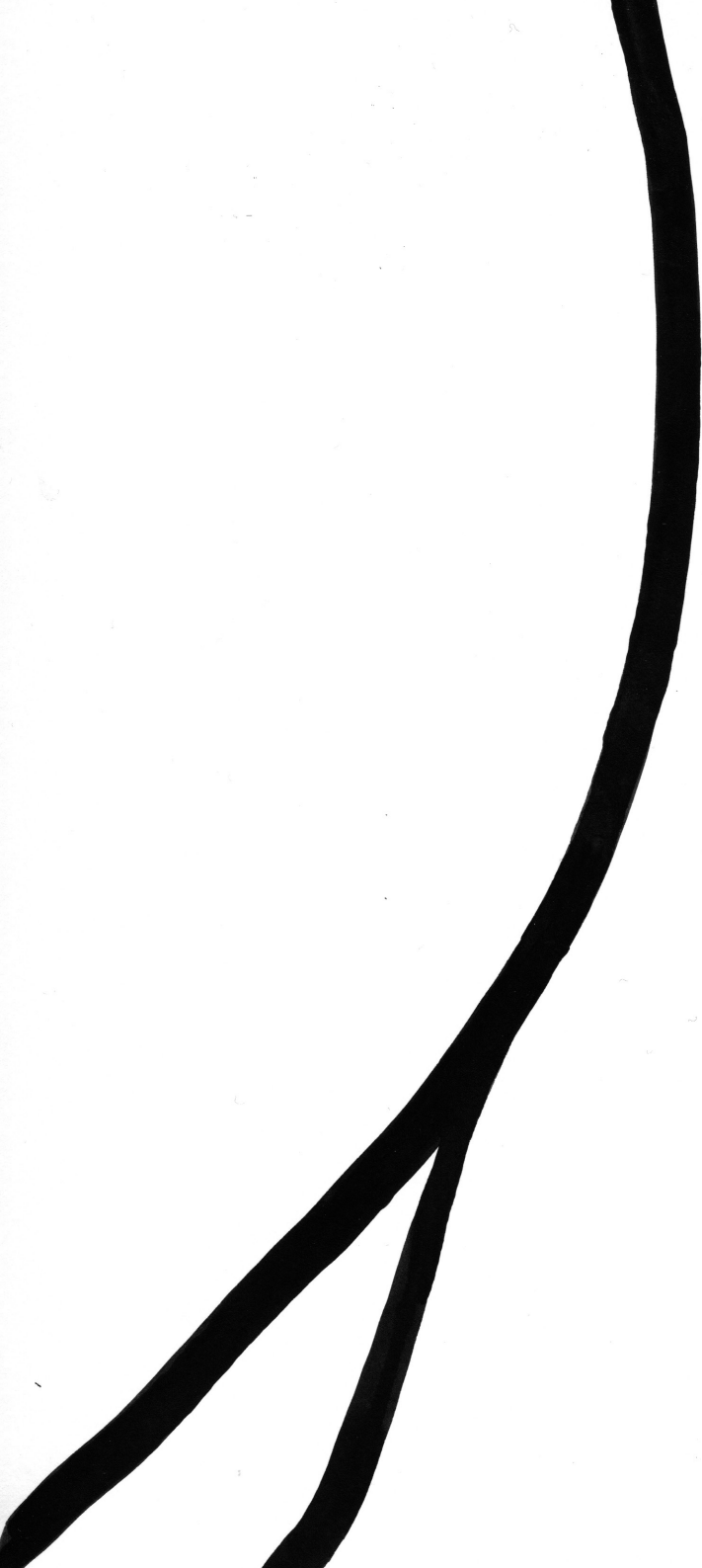
Please open your window wider
and let us gaze out together.

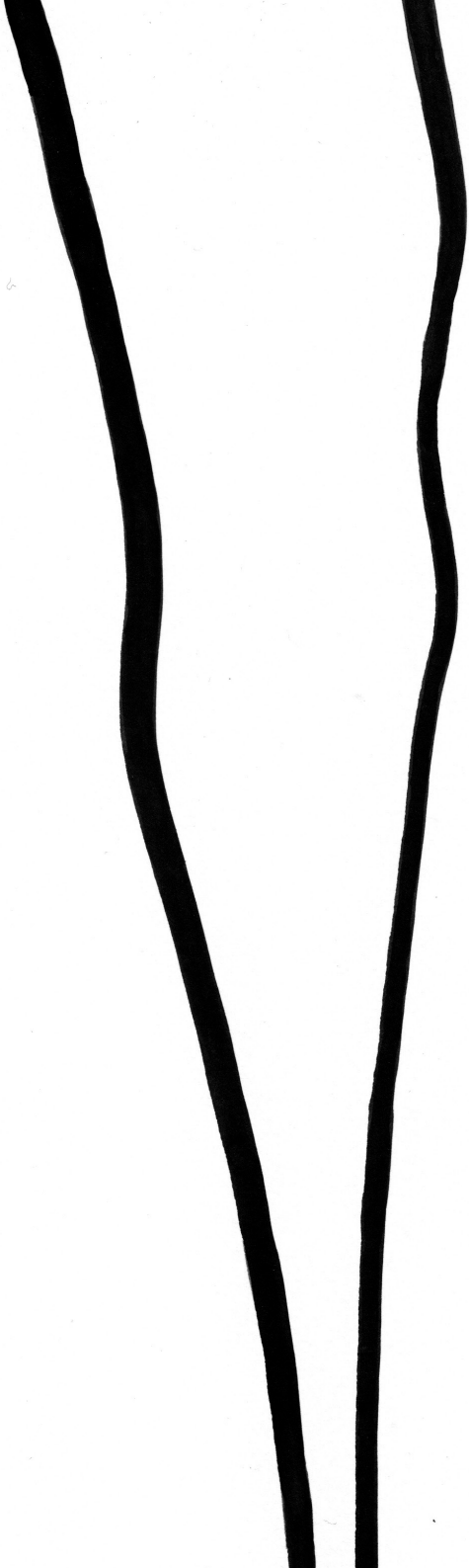
So water laps hungrily at the creased edge
of my bottle,
to spill its self into view,
does my skin ache for contact –
a finger to trace the
nape of my neck or
the tendons behind my kneel.

Perhaps in a week...

And perhaps then I shall
touch you beneath your ribcage
or just behind your ear.

The crease in the corner of my eye
has collected water
I am not crying.
Southwards, the clouds seem
to mock me, coming
the same way, always.
Last week I stared
directly at the sun
I saw your reflection
in its radiation you never said goodbye
last time I left.





Pursued

Not one for second chances,
my exit quiet and final
with fingers wrapped tightly 'round
face
to hide what I've never seen.

Head turned over,
mind ransacked for words
to write on leaving, never-ending
repetition of my seven-year story.

Then seven-hour journey for
seven-week stay resounds in my
chest
as if the bell has tolled,
perhaps of liberty, perhaps of loss.

My Words Might Wander

My eyes might wander
but my words won't mind,
their songs forgotten and lost
by all but those few, who
have lost themselves and forgotten
what goodness might actually be.

My words might wander
but my eyes won't mind,
fixed on their place
on my love,
so that soon I might forget
what loveliness really is.

Return Address

Anonymous grey afternoon, stall
Through industrial grey green valley of North,
On way to speak to stranger
Zen centre-West in Northern quarter.
Salty fingers eat at screen and watch
With stubborn eyes through curtain window
As ochre trees float past indignant:
Plastic bag hanging loose from branch
From age-old shopping trip last week made.

Tore down tarmac, seatbelt sewn
To waist – to walk through centre,
Red brick hewn rose square.
Foreign flag hangs high,
It's stars replacing soulless sky,
And stripes as roads for us to dream as Them;
That endless, ageless dream of
White fence (warehouse wall) or
Double bed (on attic floor).

Then open eyes, return to smoke
And brick and Lime.
Crow caws consciousness back in –
Black feather falling through fairground
Attraction in its eye,
Like the magpie to the coin, tarnished in gutter
With broken-glass gems, that treasured coin.
To speak of flight, and drawn to light:
Sweet irony when tied to seat.

Still lost, wrong coast with coffee cup

Burning, eyes shine

Lost in middle distance now.

Hand held under faucet for help;

Blue copper trails down porcelain, his

Helmet lost, oh

eyes despair

To look through West's polluted air

And graces bowl with open mouth,

Lets loose red brick and dream of Them.



Exit

Taken down six hundred miles on plane to same country,
Losing life through airport gate to make lost friends;
But Virginia interrupts and Colorado separates, London their
intermediary,
Maybe Summer months or some
Left behind weeks at year's old end.

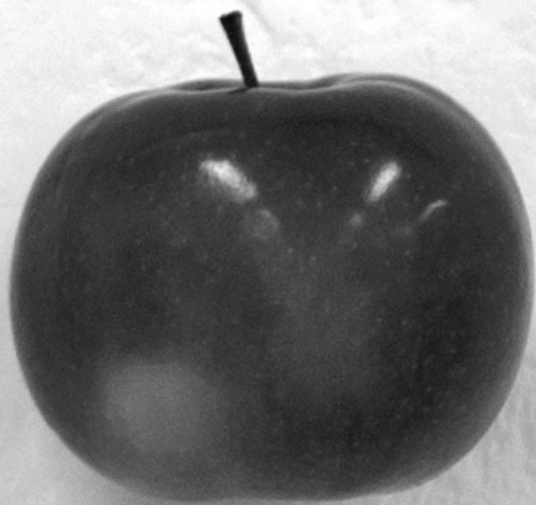
Trees lose their leaves, sad and balding, as hours fall away
In contemplation of soup or bread or tea or seat,
Salting the wounds that such time never healed.
Perhaps whiter page than butterflies
In jars return to mind.

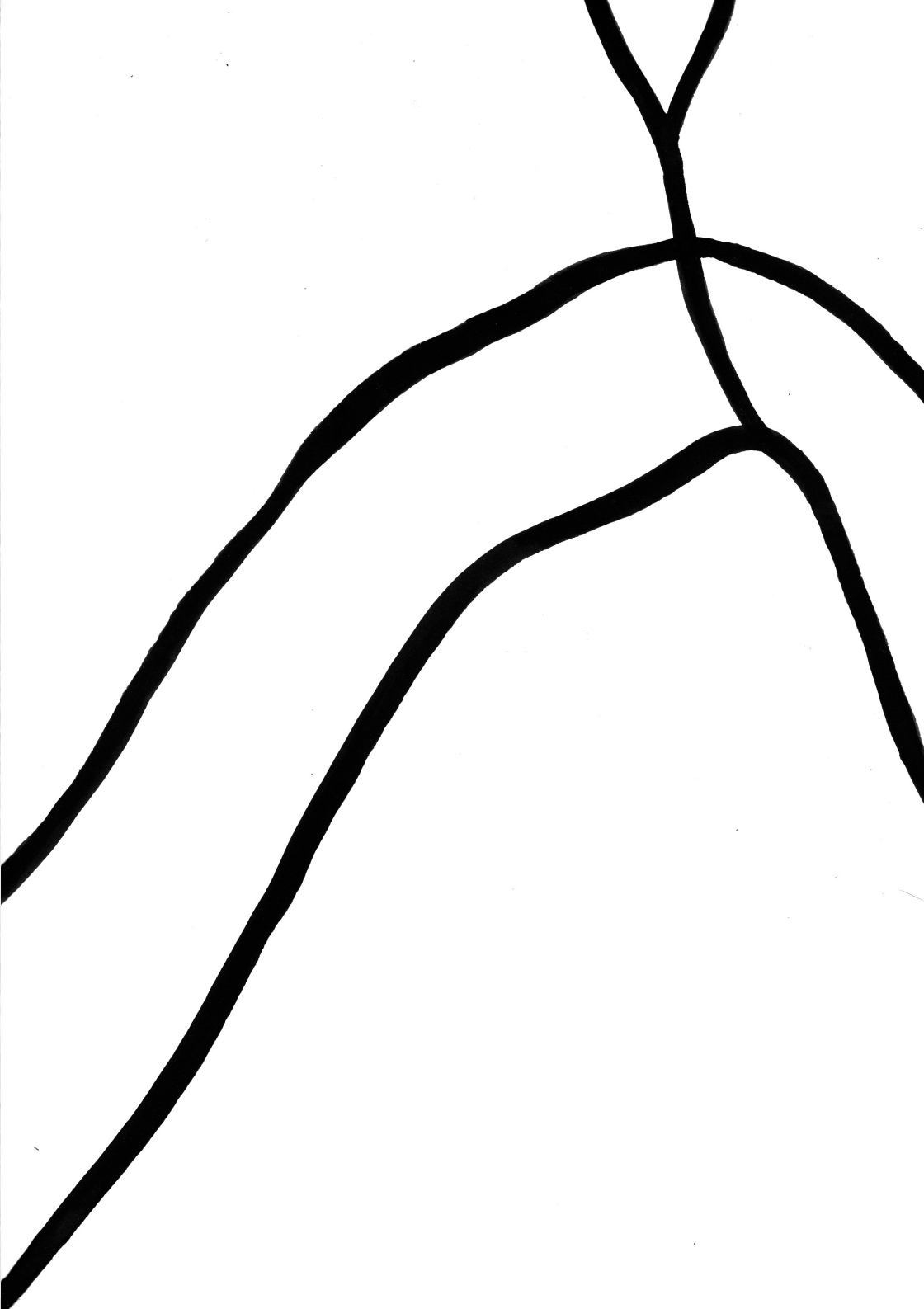
Through window, crystals form and fall,
Losing form to think of achieving
Such great heights, high hopes to float among stars over
Midland.
Severed by Severn, or train to Seven Sisters,
You, left behind at week's old end.

And Yet Here I Am, Screaming

Step out for a cigarette,
Or two,
Don't even smoke any more,
 the air in that room is a bit thick anyway.
But I'm with someone somewhere else,
Barely speaking breathless haze
On lips in locks, here
 But my mind is behind a microphone
Speaking out against a thing
That I'm not even practicing,
So perhaps these are more screams of guilt
Perhaps these screams are for secrets
Perhaps they're for what's hidden in my bones,
Or behind my eyes as I stare at yours.
Blank,
Devoid of reality-speak.
Yet still they come,
To me, regretful spokesman
For an outspoken lot.
For my desire to make peace with myself.
And after,
Stripped of throat and shirt,
Martyred sweat and breath and voice,
Left to sell my naked self and
Manufactured plastic sex soul—
 or year-old words from Zurich's world
For back-pocket shrapnel
That couldn't cut skin-deep enough.
And to do so,
Floating blank from city to city
In black jean pink thread – patched,
To open tongue to paying stranger and host
Of the things I want, or promise,
But never can act.
So maybe those messages will fade,
Delayed code out through back-rooms,
Still hopeful to settle behind those bars,
At which I'd spent endless twenty minutes,
Screaming hopelessness or hate,
For feeling left behind.







Foreword

Eyes close – skin close, with bristling hair and beading sweat.
Eyes closed to hide what they've seen, not pointed towards the sky
Like the desperate hands we used to have, reaching for those
clouds.

We'll bury our faces in the dirt, to hide what we've felt, not
Opening our features up like the pages of an old book that we were
so

Used to reading that we knew it word for word for word for word.

Foreword:

Forward!

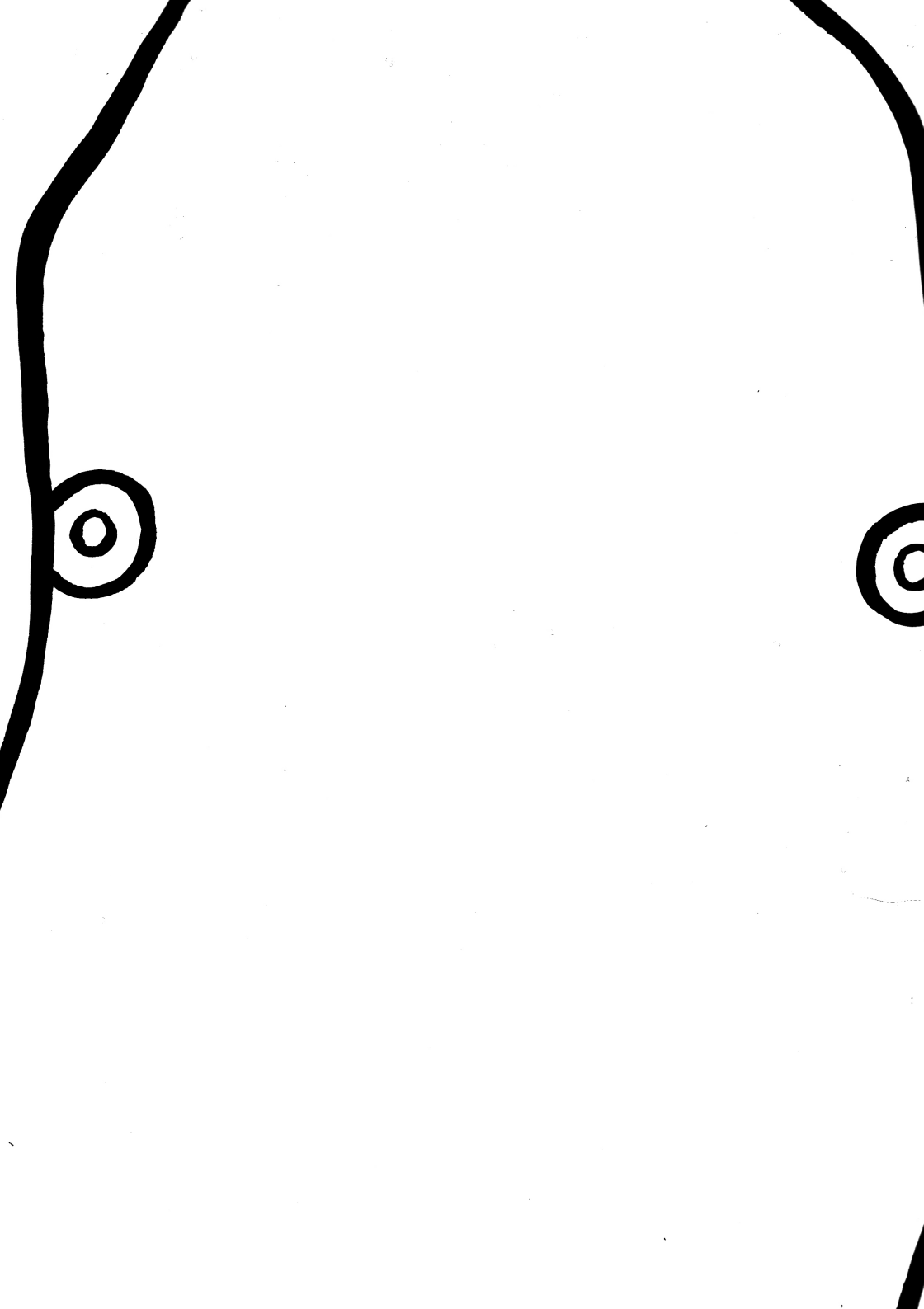
And to our scattered bodies we go,
From souls with our faces in the ground,
With our ears full of white noise
And our eyes hiding behind censored visions,
To sight and sound, a reality cloaked by clouds of self-doubt and
Dreams that were sold to us without receipts.
And to our tattered lobbies we go,
From death, we numbered infinities,
With our eyes to the clouds and our faces bare to the breeze,
To finally reach what we'd hoped for ourselves, for our souls...
Only to realise we'd be shot down from the sky, or fly too close to the
sun;

Reincarnations of Icarus peppered by a nine millimetre.
We'll fall, and fall further than we ever thought we could,
Crashing down into craters we couldn't crawl out of,
And led to circle them infinitely, our bodies disseminated
And our minds in tatters, homeless and heartless and
Endlessly stretching out into the forever.

Staring at the sun from the bottom of our wells,
Too shallow to drown in
And too shallow to admit defeat.

So we'll circle our pits, resenting faces we barely knew and
Reminisce of a time when we didn't have to keep ourselves awake
Just to remember our names.

The sun-ripened yellow fruit of
soft chest falls from sight,
lost in love at two a.m. –
early-hour bloodless touch.
Hair falls blind over humourless
vitriol, too calm and comforted,
lost in self at two a.m. –
early-hour thoughtless love.



A whistle,
remembrance, for those perfect
round stones we caressed together
on Brighton beach, as if each other;
and threw into the sea –
as if our cautions –
love for your smooth surface,
mine amongst another ocean of rocks,
I am ground away to the sand of
desire that slips through
slight fingers, to palm,
waiting for my time, whilst
sun set over scaffold in the west,
moon taking possession of my vision,
and you of my shoulder.





The skin of my lips
is not as soft or as red
as it was last year.

A cascade of fingertips
traces the contours of my spine,
cold, tugging at the strings of my mind
to play me like an instrument
left untouched for so long,
now out of tune and fragile.

It seems the lime trees
are not feeling frivolous
this year, what a shame.

One step

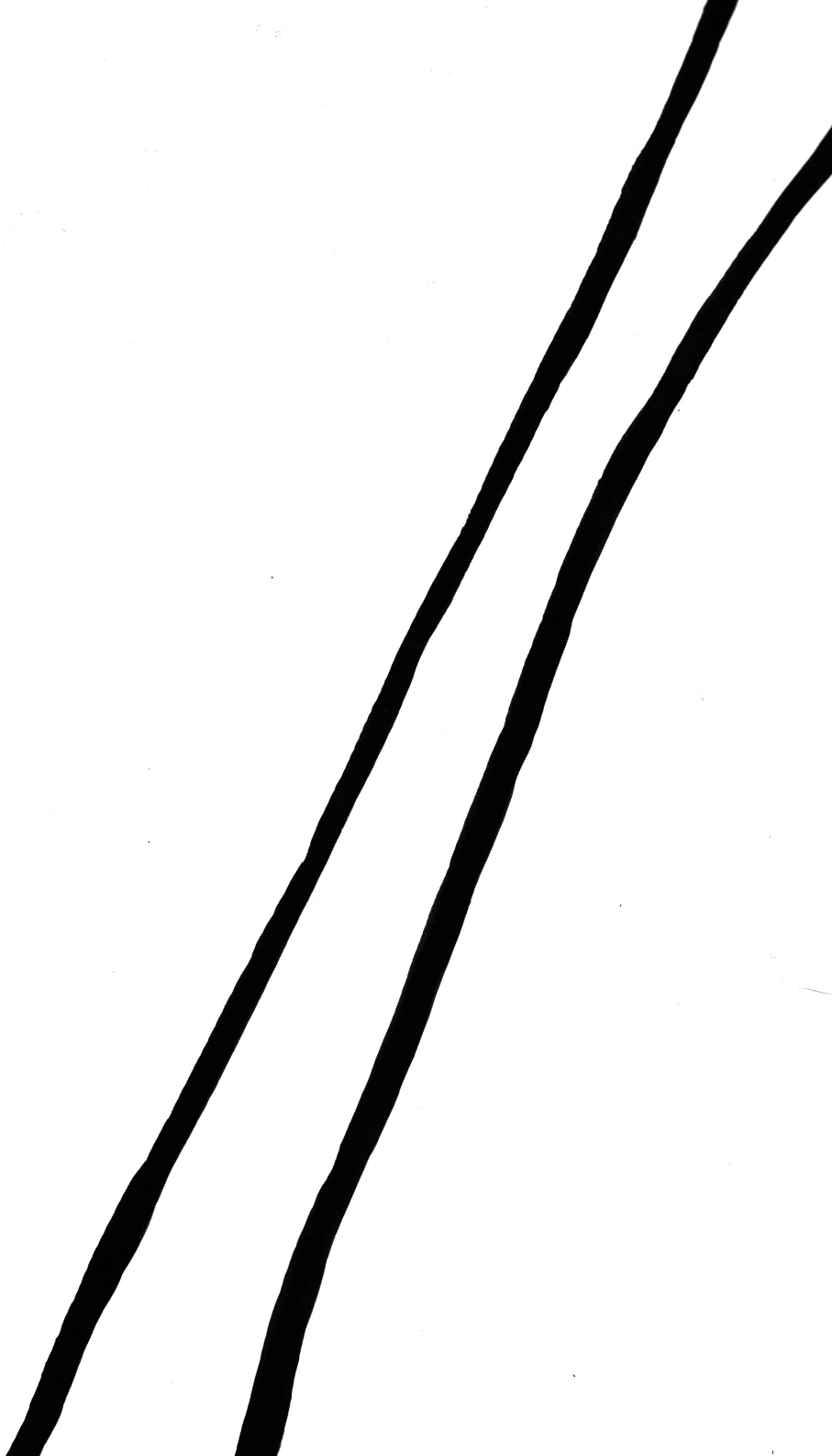
two step

three step....

....towards my bedroom floor.





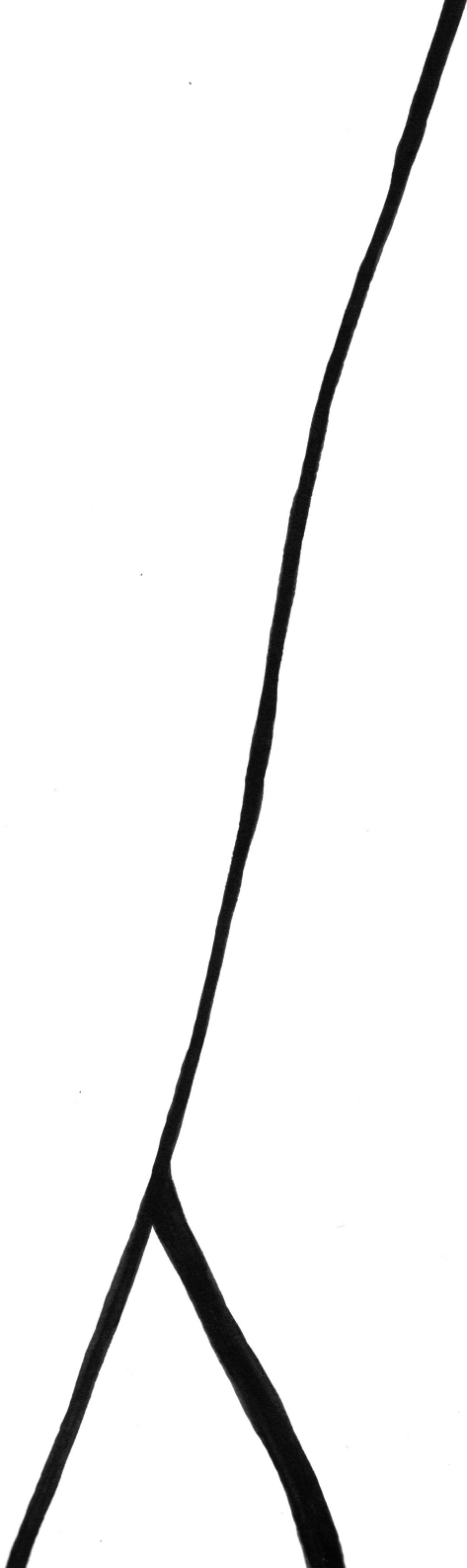


Some silent word stays hidden,
kept by tongue behind teeth
to stay its secrets one more night.

My throat might cry for
lacklustre lust, yet you, distant
and radiant amongst the
constellation of my thoughts
set worries straight with
such sweet promises, the
ripened fruit of my dreams.

“What a beautiful dream...”

the places where our skin and our lips meet
as a border with no real lines
not quite my body but not quite
your body,
but the places in between, what
a beautiful dream.



The cold November air
has built walls around my body;
rain-soaked window panes
my last line of defence from
the cruelty of city concrete

And the ballast, weighing down
my limbs to think dreams of you,
and I in Edinburgh,
as heavy as my heart remembering,
so fondly, those quiet times.

Lifeblood

Limp, but listening
as you dance, your soft feet
gathering dust from the darkness;
your glass of water is the soundtrack.

Bury my thoughts
in the places where our bodies might meet
tonight. I

want to feel your love
painting its way through
the inside of my veins.



Keep me inside, keep me afraid
Stay in my mind, stay in my bed

Words whisper around corners
past glass
like our watered-down wine
through blood's vessel.

Your ambition would burn
if I could ever hold a candle to it.
Still, I don't think I have ever seen you,
completely, naked.

